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2004 California Boating SAFETY REPORT



Statewide Boating Accident Statistics

(SACRAMENTO, CA)—To highlight NATIONAL SAFE BOATING WEEK—May 21-27, 2005—the California Department of Boating and Waterways has released the 2004 update of its annual *California Boating Safety Report* (BSR), which contains statewide statistics and analysis of non-commercial boating accidents, injuries, fatalities, and property damage. Copies of the 2004 BSR are currently available directly from the Department. A PDF version is available on the Department's website: dbw.ca.gov/SafetyReports.htm.

In 2004, there were **744 accidents** reported to the Department, which involved **439 injuries** and **44 fatalities**. The total number of accidents is **23% lower** than the 963 accidents reported in 2003. Areas of the state showing the **largest decreases** in accidents were **lakes and the San Francisco Bay**. The total number of accidents on lakes decreased 33% from the 2003 season. Reasons for this decrease vary, however the largest reason appears to be **lower water levels on many lakes**. Some waterway managers reported a 50% decreases in visitation to lakes in their jurisdiction. Reasons for decreases at specific lakes can be obtained from local water body managers. Accident decreases in the San Francisco Bay appear to be attributed to changes in accident reporting procedures.

Accidents involving personal watercraft (PWC) and water skiing activities also decreased. Since these activities primarily take place on lakes, this decrease is attributed at least in part to reasons given for the decrease in overall accidents.

Other areas of the state did not experience decreases in boating accidents. The **Colorado River**, the **Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta**, and a number of coastal areas such as **Mission Bay** and **Newport Bay** experienced a **rise in accident totals**.

Statewide Highlights

- ➤ Alcohol was involved in 38% of all boating fatalities.
- ➤ 18% of all accidents and fatalities and 25% of injuries occurred on holiday weekends.
- ➤ Open motorboats were involved in 52% of accidents. PWC were involved in 28% of accidents.
- ➤ 16% of accidents occurred during water skiing activities, including water skiing, wakeboarding, and tubing. For the first time, accidents involving vessels towing tubes surpassed accidents involving both wakeboarding and traditional water skiing.

Statewide Boating Accident Statistics



1980–2004 California Boating Accident Statistics

Year	Accidents	Injuries	Fatalities	Property Damage
1980	657	270	112	\$2,039,800
1981	728	319	87	\$3,655,630
1982	696	323	103	\$2,497,000
1983	648	333	95	\$3,713,100
1984	791	341	93	\$2,491,700
1985	869	403	76	\$4,246,400
1986	741	319	68	\$2,645,500
1987	905	325	54	\$3,381,600
1988	745	333	51	\$2,396,100
1989	632	371	43	\$3,669,800
1990	761	416	50	\$3,131,200
1991	750	421	58	\$2,653,800
1992	689	447	59	\$4,360,100
1993	743	434	67	\$2,052,800
1994	709	386	40	\$1,740,300
1995	833	490	52	\$2,536,500
1996	850	537	56	\$2,241,700
1997	925	526	43	\$3,266,800
1998	772	413	58	\$2,299,600
1999	907	491	42	\$2,864,000
2000	906	524	51	\$3,038,400
2001	907	502	48	\$2,841,900
2002	911	468	53	\$3,732,850
2003	963	502	61	\$3,820,000
2004	744	439	44	\$4,073,400

2004 California Boating Accidents by County

2004 Camornia Boating Accidents by County				
County	Accidents	Injuries	Fatalities	Property Damage
Alameda	5	1	0	\$47,050
Amador	6	4	0	\$31,000
Butte	9	1	1	\$30,600
Calaveras	9	6	0	\$20,600
Colusa	2	1	0	\$20,000
Contra Costa	21	17	0	\$54,050
Del Norte	5	4	3	\$45,500
El Dorado	14	8	2	\$52,650
Fresno	14	10	1	\$12,950
Glenn	2	1	1	\$25,000
Humboldt	1	2	1	\$2,000
Imperial	8	6	1	\$9,100
Kern	10	7	0	\$5,200
Kings	2	1	0	\$12,800
Lake	9	9	0	\$32,000
Lassen	1	0	0	\$6,000
Los Angeles	61	15	0	\$593,950
Madera	3	2	1	\$6,000
Marin	3	0	0	\$42,000
Mariposa	4	4	0	\$9,500
Mendocino	2	0	1	\$6,000
Merced	4	2	2	\$4,000
Monterey	7	4	3	\$6,500
Napa	33	23	0	\$80,750
Nevada	9	4	1	\$23,500
Orange	80	16	0	\$413,700
Placer				
Plumas	22	8	0	\$225,650
Riverside	8	4	0	\$4,850
	41 21	31 9	3 0	\$105,400
Sacramento San Bernardino	52	60	8	\$48,900
				\$600,300
San Diego	57	30	0	\$191,400
San Francisco	8	2	1	\$43,500
San Joaquin	64	35	2	\$697,750
San Luis Obispo	6	5	0	\$4,600
San Mateo	2	0	1	\$600
Santa Barbara	2	0	0	\$10,550
Santa Clara	14	15	0	\$12,700
Shasta	28	27	2	\$316,500
Siskiyou	1	0	1	\$550 #26.000
Solano	7	7	2	\$26,900
Sonoma	14	9	1	\$22,000
Stanislaus	5	4	0	\$15,500 \$17,200
Sutter	4	4	0	\$13,200
Tehama	2	1	0	\$10,000
Trinity	9	5	0	\$9,200
Tulare	15	10	3	\$52,550
Tuolumne	20	18	0	\$34,250
Ventura	11	1	2	\$15,650
Yolo	2	2	0	\$2,000
Yuba	5	4	0	\$16,500
Totals	744	439	44	\$4,073,400

Northern CA Highlights

- ➤ San Joaquin County had the most accidents (64) of any northern county.
- ➤ 22% of all Northern CA boating accidents occurred on holiday weekends.
- ➤ 41-50 year olds were involved in more accidents than any other age group.
- ➤ 21% of Northern CA accidents involved water skiing.
- ➤ 62% involved an open motorboat and 20% involved a PWC.

2004 Northern CA Accidents by Type of Waterbody			
	Accidents	Injuries	Fatalities
Northern Lakes	218	143	9
Northern Rivers	23	18	3
Nothern Coast	21	17	7
San Franscisco Bay Area	18	9	3
Delta	100	57	2
Total	380	244	24

2004 Northern CA Accidents by Top Counties			
County	Accidents	Injuries	Fatalities
San Joaquin	64	35	2
Napa	33	23	0
Shasta	28	27	2
Placer	22	8	0
Contra Costa	21	17	0
Sacramento	21	9	0

2004 Northern CA Accidents by Top Areas				
Areas	Accidents	Injuries	Fatalities	
Delta	100	57	2	
Lake Shasta	26	22	2	
Lake Berryessa	33	23	0	
San Francisco Bay	18	9	3	
Folsom Lake	13	5	0	
Don Pedro Reservoir	13	13	0	



Southern CA Highlights

- ➤ Orange County had more accidents (80) than any other southern county.
- ➤ 43% of all Southern CA accidents were the result of collisions with other vessels.
- ➤ 41% involved open motorboat, and 30% involved a PWC.
- ➤ The **21-30 age group** was involved in the most accidents in Southern CA.
- ➤ The largest number of southern fatalities occurred on lakes and the Colorado River.

2004 Southern CA Accidents by Type of Waterbody				
	Accidents Injuries Fatalities			
Southern Lakes	108	65	8	
Southern Rivers	7	5	2	
Southern Coast	190	52	2	
Colorado River	59	73	8	
Total	364	195	20	

2004 Southern CA Accidents by Top Counties					
County	County Accidents Injuries Fatalities				
Orange	80	16	0		
Los Angeles	61	15	0		
San Diego	57	30	0		
San Bernardino	52	60	8		
Riverside	41	31	3		

2004 Southern CA Accidents by Top Areas				
Areas	Accidents	Injuries	Fatalities	
Colorado River	59	73	8	
Lake Perris	44	24	2	
Mission Bay	41	37	0	
Newport Bay	38	4	0	
San Diego Bay	25	1	0	

California Boating Fatalities

- ➤ 44 boating fatalities in 2004, down from 61 in 2003.
- ➤ The most common type of fatal accident was capsizing 36%, followed by collisions with vessels 23% and falls overboard. (20%)

Alcohol Related Fatalities

➤ 38% of fatal accidents involved alcohol, up from 21 % in 2003. 2/3 of the victims were passengers, several of whom contributed to their deaths due to poor judgment related to alcohol consumption.

Fishing Fatalities

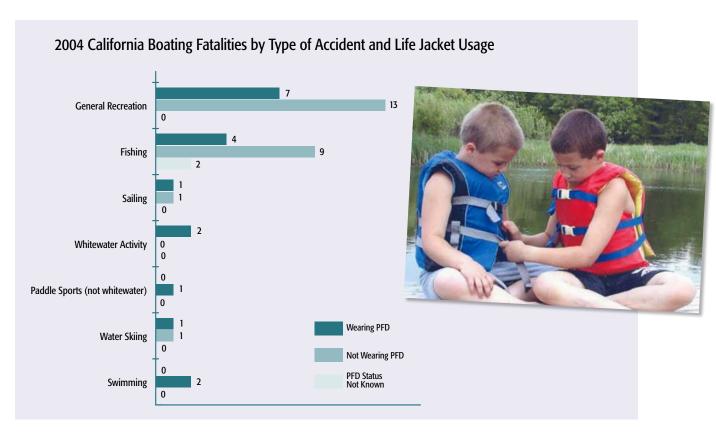
- ➤ 34% of fatalities were fishing-related.
- ➤ 87% were the result of vessels capsizing or falls overboard.
- All victims drowned and 60% were not wearing a life jacket.

Carbon Monoxide

➤ The inhalation of carbon monoxide resulted in 1 fatality in 2004. (See new law on page 5 of this packet.)

Dangerous behaviors include

- ➤ Leaning over the stern of the vessel while the engine is engaged.
- ➤ Teak surfing (body surfing while holding onto the swim step of a vessel that is underway).
- ➤ Improper ventilation in an enclosed cabin.
- > Swimming near the stern of a vessel whose engine is engaged.



Personal Watercraft (PWC)

In 2004, there were **186 PWC-related accidents** that resulted in **148 injuries** and **7 fatalities**. All of these numbers are lower than 2003 totals which were 261, 200, and 12 respectively).

- ➤ Accidents involving PWC have decreased 52% since January 1998, when two laws—one regarding operator age limits and another banning radical maneuvers—went into effect. Accidents involving youths operating all types of vessels have decreased 58% and PWC accidents involving radical maneuvers (such as wake jumping, donuts, and spraying other vessels) have decreased 58%.
- ➤ 70% of PWC-related accidents and 86% of PWC-related fatalities resulted from collisions with other vessels.
- ➤ 76% of PWC involved in accidents were borrowed or rented compared with 34% for all vessels.

2004 PWC-Related Accidents by Top Regions			
	Accidents	Injuries	Fatalities
Southern Lakes	53	36	1
Northern Lakes	51	39	3
Colorado River	27	26	1
Southern Coast	25	27	0
Delta	20	13	0
Northern Rivers	6	3	0
Southern Rivers	4	4	2
Total	186	148	7

A large number of PWC-related collisions involved **two operators who were riding together**. Operators riding together tend to:

- > Follow at an unsafe distance.
- ➤ Engage in horseplay-spraying others, jumping wakes, etc.
- ➤ Approach the other vessel at **too great a speed** in order to talk or pull along side another operator.

New Laws and Initiatives Carbon Monoxide

As of January 1, 2005, California law prohibits operating a vessel's motor while a person is teak surfing, platform dragging, or bodysurfing behind the vessel. Teak surfing or platform dragging, is a nationwide fad that involves pulling a person through the boat's wake while the person holds on to the back of the boat. The law imposes a fine of up to \$100 on anyone who operates a vessel's engine while a person is holding on to the swim platform, swim ladder, or swim step on a boat. The law provides exceptions for briefly assisting with docking or departure, entering or exiting the vessel, or participating in law enforcement or emergency rescue activity.



Fishing

The Department has created new public service announcements for both television and radio on the importance of **wearing life jackets** while **boating** and **fishing**. These spots are currently playing statewide.



Department of Motor Vehicles Vessels 13-foot and under with Jet Propulsion by County 2004

County	Number of PWC	Number of Vessels (includes PWC)
Alameda	3,745	27,673
Alpine	5	148
Amador	174	3,037
Butte	1,130	16,334
Calaveras	422	5,665
Colusa	106	1,383
Contra Costa	5,414	37,277
Del Norte	50	1,505
El Dorado	991	14,131
Fresno	2,580	21,910
Glenn	138	1,886
Humboldt	428	7,548
Imperial	529	2,395
Inyo	159	1,139
Kern	2,941	16,152
Kings	525	2,716
Lake	999	10,360
Lassen	232	3,176
Los Angeles	34,013	119,598
Madera	590	5,767
Marin	526	9,218
Mariposa	94	1,481
Mendocino	394	5,022
Merced	784	6,574
Modoc	29	749
Mono	160	1,578
Monterey	1,059	8,985
Napa	537	6,834
Nevada	443	9,453
Orange	19,421	66,907

County	Number of PWC	Number of Vessels (includes PWC)
Placer	2,099	20,315
Plumas	184	3,691
Riverside	15,812	50,039
Sacramento	5,032	45,764
San Benito	320	1,946
San Bernardino	15,564	50,060
San Diego	12,435	64,519
San Francisco	359	4,053
San Joaquin	2,754	25,206
San Luis Obispo	1,423	12,697
San Mateo	1,742	12,380
Santa Barbara	1,215	10,204
Santa Clara	4,562	28,010
Santa Cruz	592	7,768
Shasta	1,134	18,702
Sierra	6	336
Siskiyou	142	4,169
Solano	1,770	15,741
Sonoma	2,063	19,157
Stanislaus	2,370	18,277
Sutter	570	5,505
Tehama	291	4,363
Trinity	78	2,156
Tulare	1,312	8,991
Tuolumne	378	6,107
Ventura	5,260	25,756
Yolo	451	5,984
Yuba	330	4,097
Out of State	469	2,290
GRAND TOTAL	159,335	894,884